

U. S. Department of Justice

Declassification authority:
Derived from FBI Automatic
Declassification Guide,
Issued May 24, 2007

(MATERIAL MUST NOT BE REMOVED FROM OR ADDED TO THIS FILE)

DO NOT DESTROY;
HISTORICAL VALUE,
NATIONAL ARCHIVES

FEDERAL BUREAU

Screened by NARA (RD-F) 11-26-2013
FOIA = 83627 DocID: 34287030

of

INVESTIGATION

Bureau File Number 157-20965

See also Nos. Separate 1A Volume

CLASSIFICATION NO.

157-13921

Serials

Volume Number

C 3/19/71
M. P. Miller 2-23-71

F B I

Date: 2/22/71

Transmit the following in PLAINTEXT
(Type in plaintext or code)Via TELETYPE NITEL
(Priority)

TO: DIRECTOR; ATTENTION: DOMESTIC INTELLIGENCE DIVISION
FROM: JACKSON (157-NEW) (P)

UNSUB; BURNING OF JOHN RUNDLE HIGH SCHOOL, GRENADA,
MISS., FEBRUARY TWENTY TWO, SEVENTY ONE; RM;; PE - CRA,
SIXTY FOUR. *OO: JACKSON.*

AT THREE A.M., FEBRUARY TWENTY TWO, SEVENTY ONE,
TWO WHITE MALE PASSERS-BY OBSERVED THE FIRE IN THE
LOCATION OF THE COUNSELLOR'S OFFICE AT JOHN RUNDLE HIGH
SCHOOL, GRENADA, AN INTEGRATED SCHOOL HOUSING GRADES
ELEVEN AND TWELVE OPERATING UNDER COURT ORDER ISSUED
USDC, NDM. SCHOOL HAS ENROLLMENT OF APPROXIMATELY
FOUR HUNDRED EIGHTY FIVE STUDENTS; FIFTY TWO PERCENT
BLACK, FORTY EIGHT PERCENT WHITE. SAME TWO WHITE MALES
REPORTED FIRE TO GRENADA PD WHO SUMMONED GRENADA FIRE
DEPARTMENT. ASSISTANCE IN COMBATting BLAZE OFFERED BY

1 Jackson
MPM:ccs

Approved: *RKM/808*
Special Agent in Charge

Sent

Per

3-1-71
2-2-71
00:00
#4
922
157-13921-1
Searched
Serialized
Indexed
Filed
m. P. Miller
with
Contact informants &
source & Be sure CH/M show results

F B I

Date:

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)Via _____
(Priority)

PAGE TWO

~~BY~~ UNITS OF THE GREENWOOD, MISSISSIPPI, FIRE DEPARTMENT.
NO INJURIES REPORTED FROM THE FIRE.

RUNDLE SCHOOL BUILT IN NINETEEN TWENTY-TWO IS TOTAL
LOSS. PRELIMINARY DAMAGE ESTIMATE IS FIVE HUNDRED
THOUSAND DOLLARS INCLUDING THE BUILDING AND FIXTURES.
GYM, SHOP BUILDING, AND NINETEEN FIFTY-EIGHT ANNEX
NOT DESTROYED.

ALL GRENADA COUNTY SCHOOLS CLOSED FEBRUARY TWENTY
TWO, SEVENTY ONE, EXPECTED TO REOPEN FEBRUARY TWENTY
THREE, SEVENTY ONE, UNDER STAGGERED SCHEDULE TO COMPENSATE
FOR REDUCED NUMBER OF CLASSROOMS.

MISSISSIPPI STATE FIRE MARSHALS INVESTIGATING. CAUSE
OF FIRE NOT YET DETERMINED. FIRE MARSHAL D. B. CROCKETT,
TUPELO, MISS., ESTABLISHED FIRE DID BEGIN IN COUNSELLOR'S
OFFICE ADJACENT TO FRONT DOOR OF SCHOOL. ARSON NOT
INDICATED AT THIS TIME.

Approved: _____ Sent _____ M Per _____
Special Agent in Charge

F B I

Date:

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)Via _____
(Priority)

PAGE THREE

APPROPRIATE LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL AUTHORITIES

ADVISED. *ADMINISTRATIVE:**BUREAU*~~JACKSON~~ WILL BE KEPT INFORMED.

JACKSON. AT GRENADA, MISS. WILL MAINTAIN CONTACT
WITH INFORMANTS AND FOLLOW RESULTS OF FIRE MARSHAL'S
INVESTIGATION. *LHM FOLLOWS.*

END.

Approved: _____ Sent _____ M Per _____
Special Agent in Charge

Seperate

1A

Volume

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Blaze Guts Rundle High In Grenada

Main Building Lost In Fire During Winds

GRENADA, Miss. — John Rundle Attendance Center in Grenada was heavily damaged by a fire which started approximately 3:20 a.m. this morning following a stormy night.

Cause of the blaze is undetermined and the extent of the damage has not been assessed.

Grenada and Greenwood firemen were still at the scene fighting small blazes at 8 a.m.

F. G. Wilborn, superintendent of the Grenada Municipal Separate School District stated that the main building of the school, the original structure, was completely gutted with only portions of outside walls left standing.

Firefighters on the scene kept the flames from spreading to the other buildings on the campus and to nearby homes.

Fire Department officials stated that the firemen's work was hampered by the strong winds.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

PAGE 7

JACKSON DAILY NEWS

JACKSON, MISS.

Date: FEB. 22, 1971

Edition: HOME

Author:

Editor: JAMES M. WARD

Title: JOHN RUNDLE
ATTENDANCE CENTER

Character:

or

Classification: 157-13921

Submitting Office: Jackson

☐ Being Investigated

157-13921-2

SEARCHED INDEXED
SERIALIZED FILED

FBI - JACKSON

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

OFFICIALS PROBE FIRE DESTROYING GRENADA SCHOOL

GRENADA (AP) — Officials probed for the cause of a fire which damaged troubled John Rundle Attendance Center early Monday.

F. G. Wilborn, superintendent of Grenada schools, said the main building was gutted, with only parts of the outside walls of the large brick structure standing.

Officers said they had not determined the cause of the blaze or the extent of damage to smaller structures on the schoolgrounds.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

PAGE 3

THE CLARION LEDGER

JACKSON, MISS.

Date: FEB. 23, 1971

Edition: HOME

Author:

Editor: T. M. HEDERMAN, JR.

Title: JOHN RUNDEL
ATTENDANCE CENTER

Character:

or

Classification: 157-13921

Submitting Office: Jackson

☐ Being Investigated

157-13921-3

SEARCHED INDEXED
SERIALIZED FILED

JACKSON

2/25/71

AIRTEL

AIRMAIL

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI
ATTENTION: MECHANICAL SECTION, PHOTOGRAPHIC UNIT
FROM: SAC, JACKSON (157-13921) (P)

UNSUB;
BURNING OF JOHN RUNDLE HIGH
SCHOOL, GRENADA, MISS.,
2/22/71
RM; PE - CRA, 1964
OO: JACKSON

Re Jackson teletype to Bureau 2/22/71.

Enclosed herewith is one exposed roll of Kodacolor
X-type film taken in connection with captioned case.

The Bureau is requested to develop and print
four copies of each photograph and return photographs
to Jackson upon completion.

2 - Bureau (Enc. 1) (RM)
2 - Jackson
LCB:ccs/jdh
(4)

jdh *LEB*

157-13921-4

Searched	_____
Serialized	_____ <i>CVB</i>
Indexed	_____ <i>JS</i>
Filed	_____ <i>JS</i>

M. P. Miller



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Jackson, Mississippi

February 27, 1971

In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.

UNKNOWN SUBJECT;
BURNING OF JOHN RUNDLE HIGH
SCHOOL, GRENADA, MISSISSIPPI,
FEBRUARY 22, 1971

At 4:00 a.m., February 22, 1971, Chief of Police C. H. Lovorn, Grenada, Mississippi, Police Department (PD), telephonically advised a Special Agent of the FBI that John Rundle High School, Grenada, was on fire. He advised that units of the Grenada Fire Department, assisted by a unit from the Greenwood, Mississippi, Fire Department, were on the scene and combatting the blaze. He advised that there were no injuries in connection with the fire.

Investigation established that at 3:00 a.m., February 22, 1971, two white male passers-by observed a fire in the location of the Counselor's Office at John Rundle High School, an integrated school housing grades 11 and 12, operating under a Federal court order issued by U. S. District Court, Northern District of Mississippi. The school has an enrollment of approximately 485 students, 52 percent black and 48 percent white. Investigation further established that the same two white males reported the fire to the Grenada PD which summoned the Grenada Fire Department.

Investigation further established that the Rundle School was built in 1922 and that the building became a total loss as a result of the fire.

The preliminary damage estimate was set at \$500,000, including the building and fixtures. Fire fighting units prevented damage to the gymnasium, shop building and the annex which was built in 1958.

- 11 - Bureau
 - 1 - USA, Oxford
 - 1 - Secret Service, JN
 - 1 - OSI, JN
 - 2 - MIGp, JN
 - ② - Jackson (157-13921)
- MPM/clm (18) *h. e. b.*

157-13921-5
Searched _____
Serialized mg
Indexed _____
Filed _____
Mr. P. Miller in rm
by R/M.

UNKNOWN SUBJECT;
BURNING OF JOHN RUNDLE
HIGH SCHOOL, GRENADA, MISSISSIPPI

Grenada County School Administrators closed all Grenada County schools for February 22, 1971, with all other schools scheduled to reopen February 23, 1971.

Mississippi State Fire Marshals D. B. Crockett, Tupelo, Mississippi, and E. W. Patridge, Winona, Mississippi, on the scene at Grenada, conducted investigation. Preliminary determination by the Fire Marshals established that the fire began in the Counselor's Office adjacent to the front door of the school building. The Fire Marshals advised that arson was not indicated at this time.

On February 23, 1971, Mr. D. B. Crockett, Fire Marshal, advised that residue from the blaze had been accumulated and was being sent to the State Laboratory at Jackson, Mississippi. He stated there still was no evidence to indicate arson, and stated he based this on the fact that no containers or evidences of any accelerant had been discovered. He stated that there was now the possibility that the fire began on the third floor of the school building immediately above the Counselor's Office where the Fire Marshals first thought the fire might have begun. Mr. Crockett advised that he was basing this assumption on the fact that the floor area below the Counselor's Office had not sustained severe fire damage. He stated that the State Fire Marshals were continuing their investigation.

On February 24, 1971, Mr. F. G. Wilborn, Superintendent, Grenada Schools Administration, advised that his inquiries among school circles had failed to indicate arson. He advised that since the part of the State of Mississippi in which Grenada is located had, on the evening of February 21, 1971, sustained extensive tornado damage, there was the possibility that United States Government emergency funds might be available to the school for rebuilding. He stated that further inquiries were being made as to the possible availability of emergency funds.

UNKNOWN SUBJECT;
BURNING OF JOHN RUNDLE
HIGH SCHOOL, GRENADA, MISSISSIPPI

Mr. Wilborn further advised that grades 11 and 12 at Rundle were still out of school and had not yet been rescheduled in another school space. He stated that preliminary discussions had suggested that grade 11 would likely be assigned to the Dotson School in Grenada, with grade 12 using the undamaged 1958 annex on the Rundle campus. He advised that salvage operations had begun to recover what books, desks, furniture and equipment might be available.

On February 25, 1971, Chief of Police Lovorn advised that he had been informed by the Fire Marshals that the laboratory examiner at the State Laboratory in Jackson had been out of the state and would not be able to begin the examination of the residue from the Rundle blaze until March 1, 1971.

Contact with sources who have furnished reliable information in the past from February 22, 1971, through February 25, 1971, failed to establish any cause of the fire other than possible accidental damage sustained by the Rundle school building during the tornado which struck the area late February 21, 1971. This same tornado resulted in the death of some 30 persons in the north and central section of Mississippi.

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

F B I

Date: 2/27/71

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)Via AIRTEL AIRMAIL
(Priority)

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI

FROM: SAC, JACKSON (157-13921) (P)

UNSUB;
 BURNING OF JOHN RUNDLE HIGH
 SCHOOL, GRENADA, MISSISSIPPI,
 2/22/71
 RM; PE - CRA, 1964
 (OO: JACKSON)

Re Jackson tel to Bureau, 2/22/71.

Enclosed for the Bureau are 11 copies of an LHM
 re captioned matter.

One copy furnished USA, Oxford, Secret Service,
 Jackson, and OSI, Jackson; two copies furnished MIGp, Jackson.

The Agent to whom information re this incident was
 furnished was SA M. PALMER MILLER.

Appropriate local, state and Federal authorities
 advised.

LEAD

JACKSON

AT GRENADA, MISSISSIPPI. Will maintain contact with
 Mississippi State Fire Marshals for determination of cause of
 fire. Will maintain contact with sources and informants.

2 - Bureau (Encs.11) (RM)

2 - Jackson

MPM/clm (4)

Searched

Serialized

Indexed

Filed

Sent

Per

Approved: *[Signature]*

Special Agent in Charge

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 2/25/71

SA RICHARD B. OVERMYER took photographs of John Rundle High School, Grenada, Mississippi, at 7:30 a.m. on February 22, 1971, with a Besler Topcon, 35 mm camera and Speed Graphic Camera.

The fire at this time was still burning and firemen were attempting to extinguish the fire.

On 2/22/71 at Grenada, Mississippi File # Jackson 157-13921 - 7
by SA RICHARD B. OVERMYER: lcs ^{RBO} Date dictated 2/25/71

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Split session is studied by educators

Sunday, February 21, was a day of catastrophe residents of Grenada will not forget.

In the late afternoon and early evening, tornadoes caused much damage close to the city -- but the city itself was spared.

There were tornadoes reported in Holcomb, Tillatoba, Hardy, Oxberry, Cascilla and Scobey -- with no deaths being reported in these communities.

In Tillatoba, the new Baptist Church, in which a training meeting was in progress, was struck by the heavy wind at about 5 p.m. No one was injured but the building was damaged considerably. Also badly damaged was the minister's home next door to the church.

Early in the morning, a fire of undetermined origin destroyed a major portion of John Rundle High School on Line Street. Grenada Fire Department fought the flames -- which spouted from several parts of the building at once -- in cold weather and a high wind for hours. The local men were aided by a fire fighting truck from Greenwood.

There was no official report on where the fire began but it was said it could have started in one of the offices on the first floor or on the front roof. One theory was that a bolt of lightning -- of which there was considerable during the tornado period -- may have ignited the roof but that flames were delayed in making themselves noticeable.

Superintendent of School F. G. Wilborn announced early in the morning that all schools would be closed for the day while a schedule of classes was being set up to take care of the 475 students attending John Rundle. He said he could not hazard a guess as to the origin or the starting place of the fire. The new schedule may call for split sessions, Mr. Wilborn said.

John Rundle High School was built some 40 years ago and it has been added to from time to time. The Daily Sentinel-Star was told that the structure -- not including equipment -- was valued at an estimated \$125,000 and that it was not covered by insurance.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

PAGE 1

THE DAILY SENTINEL
STAR

GRENADA, MISS.

Orig. to R

Date: FEB. 25, 1971

Edition: HOME

Author:

Editor: JOSEPH B. LEE

Title: BURNING OF
GRENADA HIGH SCHOOL

Character:

or

Classification: 157-13921

Submitting Office: JACKSON

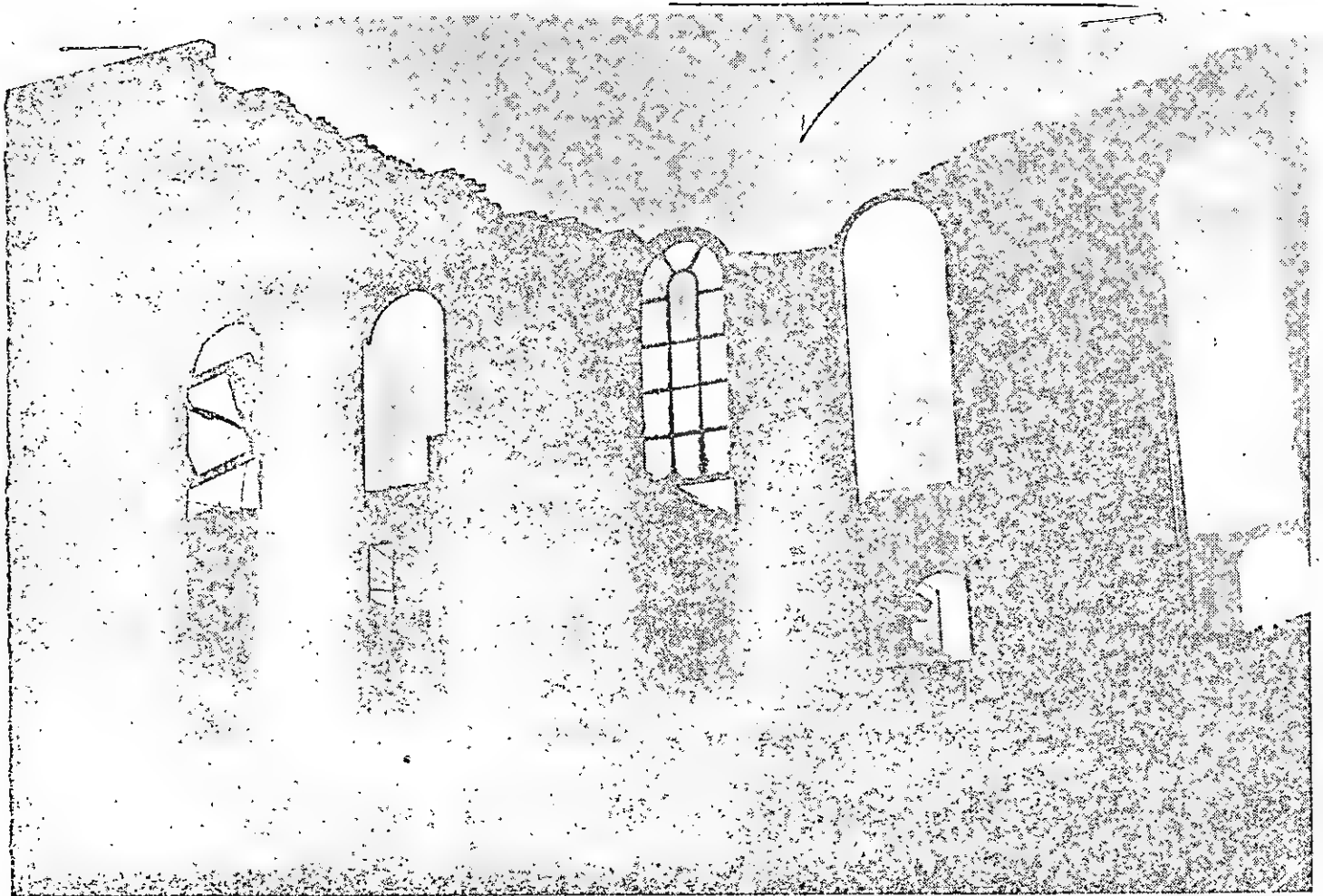
☐ Being Investigated

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
FEB 26 1971	
FBI - JACKSON	

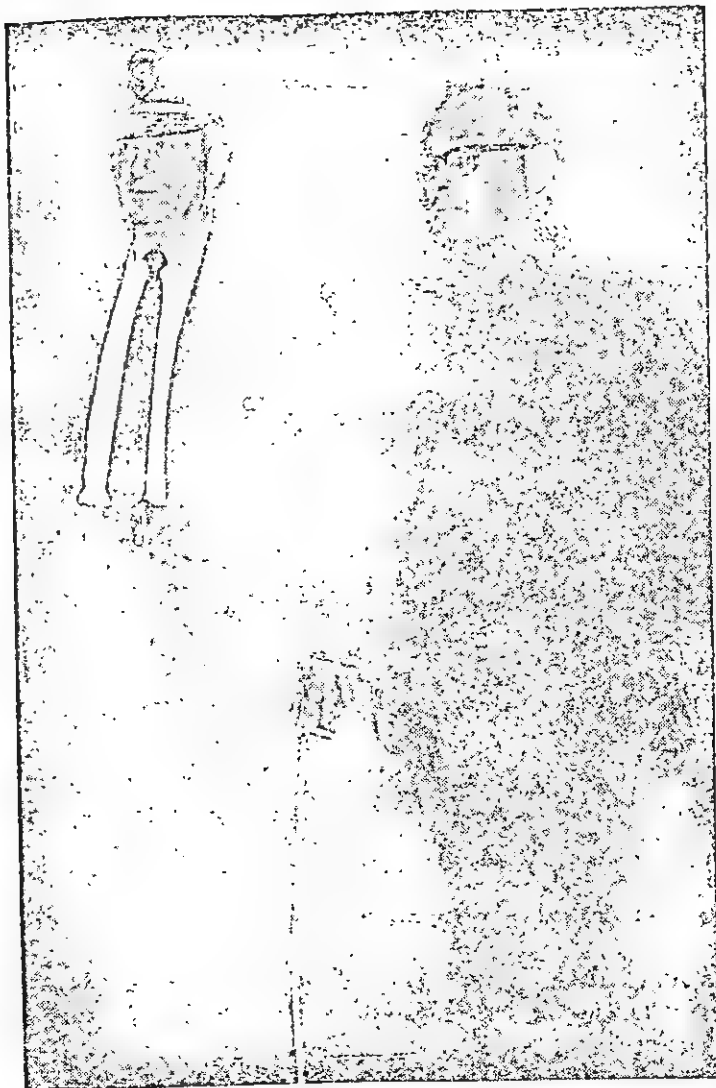
157-13921-8



OLD BUILDING SUCCUMBS TO BLAZE



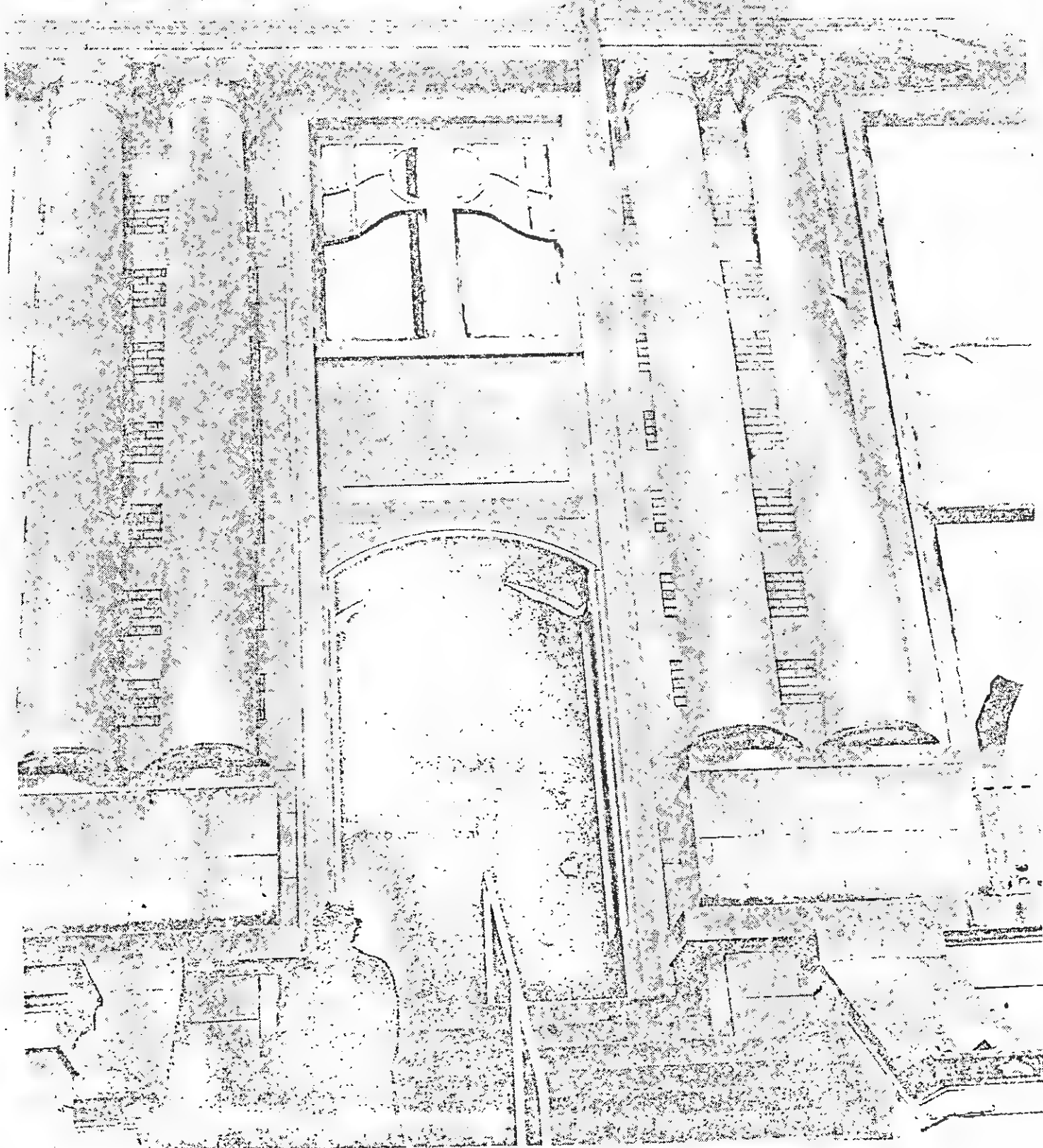
— THIS WAS THE JRHS AUDITORIUM —



GRENADA POLICE Chief John Lovorn and school Supt. F. G. Wilborn look on as Grenada firemen fight the fierce flames which engulfed Grenada's public senior high school this morning. State, federal, and local authorities are reported investigating the early morning fire.



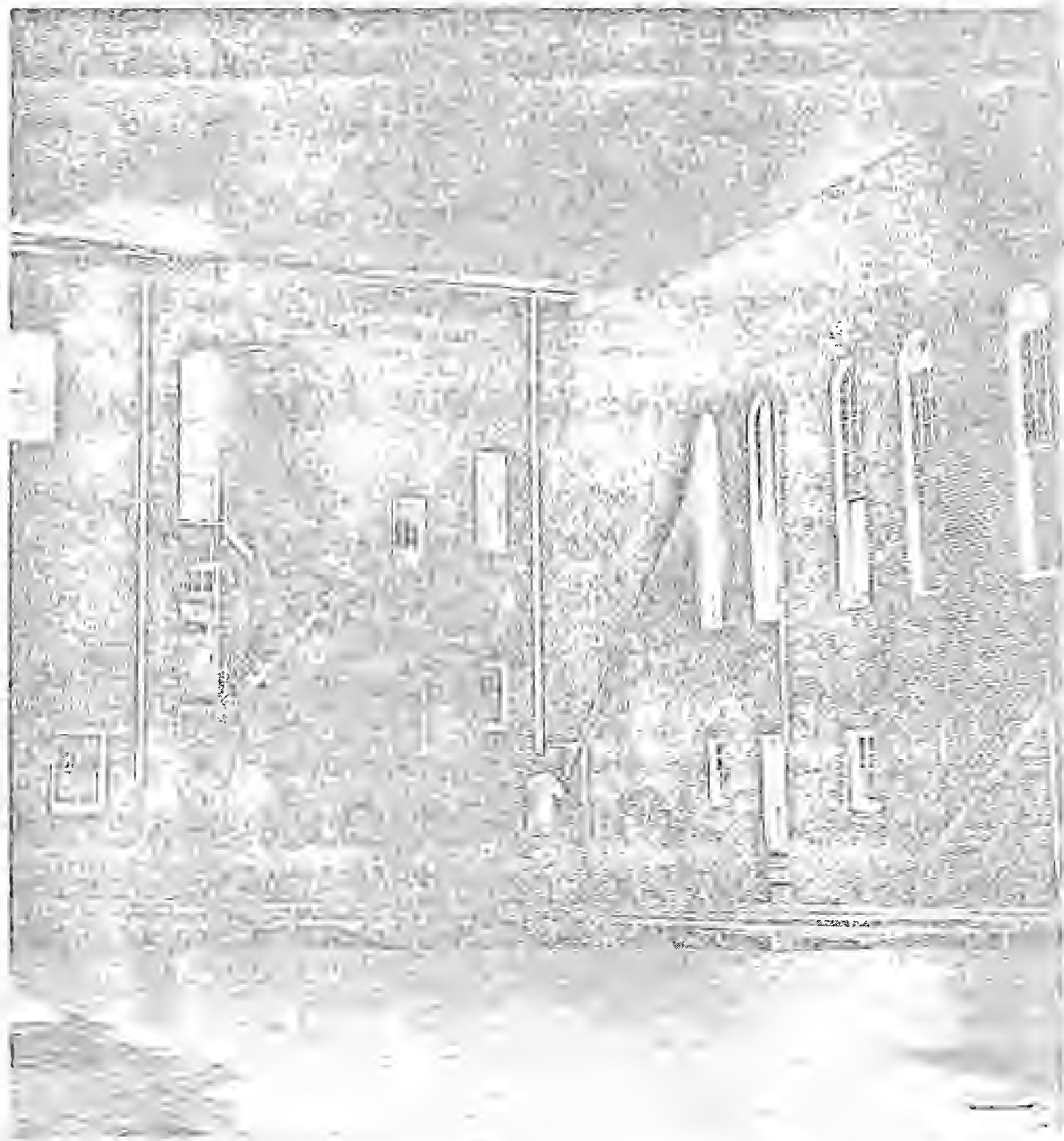
FIRE CHIEF BUD CHAPIUS (right) and volunteer Fireman Wayne Gaines ply one of the Grenada Fire Department's high pressure water lines into the burning remains of John Rundle High School about 4:30 this morning.



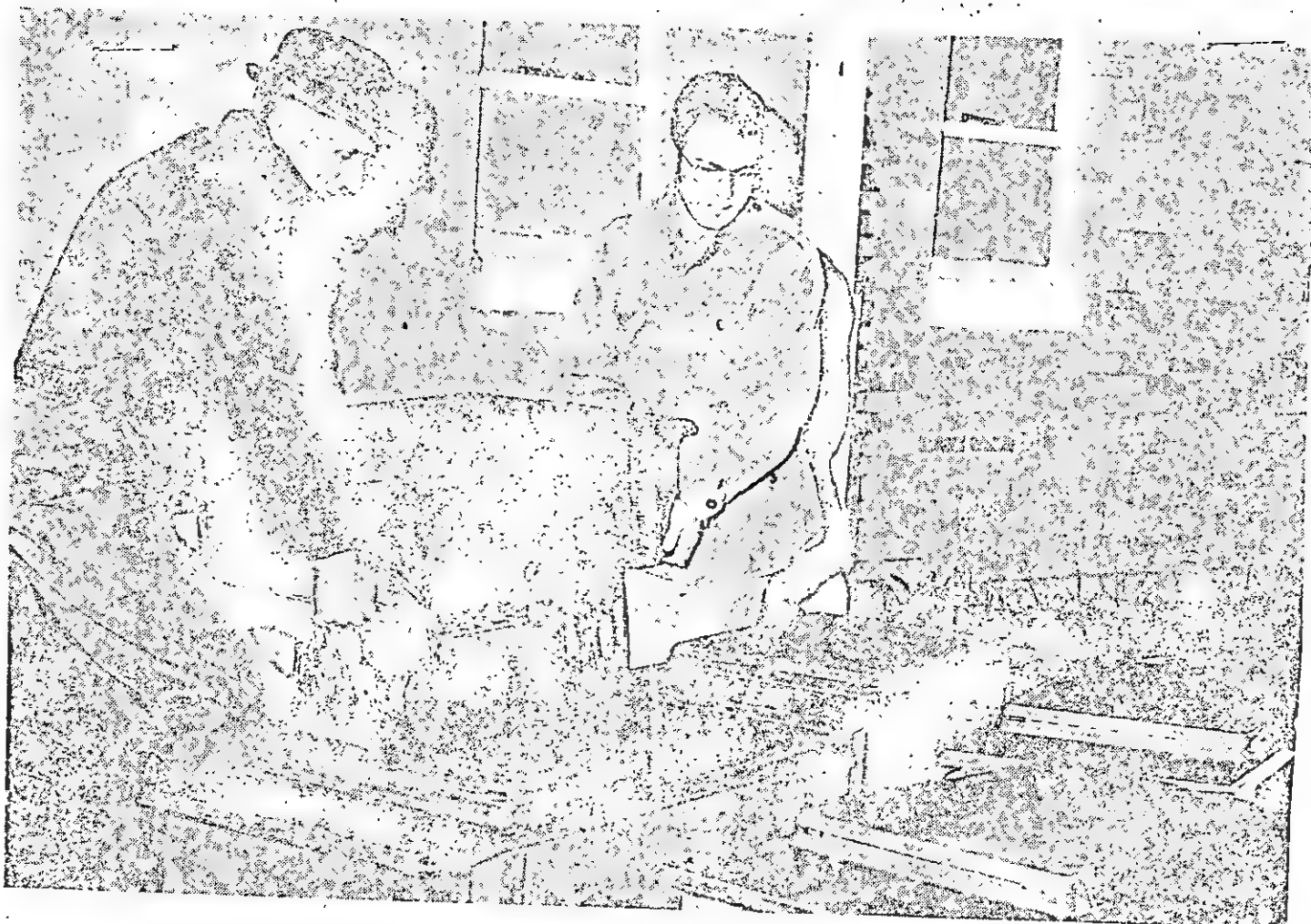
NO SCHOOL TODAY



..SAVE FURNITURE—Horton Townes, Williamson told a Daily Sentinel-Star reporter that they turned in the first alarm on the blaze at about 3 a.m. (Story on page one)
Roger Williams, and Yancy Williamson (named from left) help remove some of the furnishings from the safer wing of the burning high school. Williams and



— TOO MUCH FIRE AND WIND —



SAVE SEWING
MACHINE

Routing Slip
0-7 (Rev. 2-12-71)

(Copies to Offices Checked)

TO: SAC:

☐ Albany
☐ Albuquerque
☐ Alexandria
☐ Anchorage
☐ Atlanta
☐ Baltimore
☐ Birmingham
☐ Boston
☐ Buffalo
☐ Butte
☐ Charlotte
☐ Chicago
☐ Cincinnati
☐ Cleveland
☐ Columbia
☐ Dallas
☐ Denver
☐ Detroit
☐ El Paso
☐ Honolulu

☐ Houston
☐ Indianapolis
☒ Jackson
☐ Jacksonville
☐ Kansas City
☐ Knoxville
☐ Las Vegas
☐ Little Rock
☐ Los Angeles
☐ Louisville
☐ Memphis
☐ Miami
☐ Milwaukee
☐ Minneapolis
☐ Mobile
☐ Newark
☐ New Haven
☐ New Orleans
☐ New York City
☐ Norfolk

☐ Oklahoma City
☐ Omaha
☐ Philadelphia
☐ Phoenix
☐ Pittsburgh
☐ Portland
☐ Richmond
☐ Sacramento
☐ St. Louis
☐ Salt Lake City
☐ San Antonio
☐ San Diego
☐ San Francisco
☐ San Juan
☐ Savannah
☐ Seattle
☐ Springfield
☐ Tampa
☐ Washington Field
☐ Quantico

TO LEGAT:

☐ Beirut
☐ Bern
☐ Bonn
☐ Buenos Aires
☐ Caracas
☐ Copenhagen
☐ Hong Kong
☐ La Paz
☐ London
☐ Madrid
☐ Managua
☐ Mexico City
☐ Ottawa
☐ Paris
☐ Rome
☐ Tel Aviv
☐ Tokyo

Date 3-12-71

RE:

**BURNING OF JOHN RUNDLE HIGH SCHOOL
GRENADA, MISSISSIPPI 2-22-71
RM: PUBLIC EDUCATION CRA 1964**

RE: AIRTEL TO BUREAU 2-25-71

☒ For information ☐ Retention optional ☒ For appropriate action ☐ Surep, by _____
☐ The enclosed is for your information. If used in a future report, ☐ conceal all sources, ☐ paraphrase contents.
☐ Enclosed are corrected pages from report of SA _____ dated _____

Remarks:

**PHOTOGRAPHS RETURNED IN ACCORDANCE WITH YOUR
REQUEST, DATED 2-25-71. NEGATIVE BEING
RETAINED AT BUREAU.**

Enc. (1)

Bufile

Ufile (157-13921) (P)

157-13921-9

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
MAR 15 1971	
FBI-JACKSON	

[Signature]

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : SAC JACKSON [REDACTED]

DATE 3-15-71

FROM : SA M. PALMER MILLER [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: [REDACTED]

FOIA b 7 D

Dates of Contact 3-15-71

File #s on which contacted (Use Titles if File #s not available or when CI provides positive information)

157-13921

UNSUB: BURNING OF JOHN RUNDLE HIGH SCHOOL
GRENADA, MS., 2-22-71

Purpose and results of contact

☒ NEGATIVE

Source had no info re fire, whether accidental or arson.

☐ POSITIVE

☐ STATISTIC

Has informant shown any indication of emotional instability, unreliability or furnishing false information? No

☒ Informant certified that he has furnished all information obtained by him since last contact.

Coverage Racial

PERSONAL DATA

CC 1 JN 157-13921 (SA M. PALMER MILLER)

157-13921-10

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
MAR 17 1971	
FBI-JACKSON	

M.P. Miller [Signature]

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

No proof of arson

Grenada Fire Chief John A. Chapuis told The Daily Sentinel-Star today that he had been told by the Fire Marshall investigating the February 22 fire at John Rundle High School there was no proof that the blaze was an act of arson.

Chief Chapuis said the results of the tests made of material collected at the school immediately following the destructive fire were "negative." This meant, the chief told the paper, that nothing of an inflammable nature has as yet been found in connection with the fire.

He added that the investigators do not rule out possible incendiarism and that their studies of the ruins are continuing. The Fire Marshals,

added the chief, "are close-mouthed." They say little, but they have let it be known that they have not determined how the fire started.

SCHOOL BUS BURNS

A school bus caught fire yesterday afternoon while making its rounds, but only moderate damage to the motor resulted, it has been reported by Grenada Fire Department. The call came to the department at 4:20 p.m. after the vehicle had left Tie Plant School Tuesday and was answered by Company No. 2, the reported stated.

A leaking gas line on North Mound Street called out Company No. 1 Tuesday at 10:55 a.m. No damage was reported.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

PAGE 1

THE GRENADA SENTINEL

GRENADA, MISS.

Orig to B

Date: MARCH 17, 1971

Edition: HOME

Author:

Editor: JOSEPH LEE

Title: JOHN RUNDLE HIGH SCHOOL

Character:

or

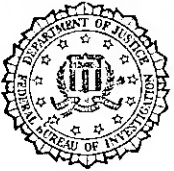
Classification: 157-13921

Submitting Office: JACKSON

☐ Being Investigated

157-13921-11

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
JACKSON	



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.

Jackson, Mississippi

March 19, 1971

UNKNOWN SUBJECT;
BURNING OF JOHN RUNDLE HIGH SCHOOL,
GRENADA, MISSISSIPPI,
FEBRUARY 22, 1971

The following information was furnished to a
Special Agent of the FBI:

On March 2, 4, 5, and 8, 1971, the Chief of
Police, C. H. Lovorn, Grenada, Mississippi, Police Depart-
ment, advised that his department had not as yet received
any information from the Mississippi State Laboratory
which was examining the residue from the burning of the
John Rundle High School.

On March 8, 1971, Mr. F. G. Wilborn, Superinten-
dent, Grenada School Administration, advised that as a
result of the fire, the eleventh grade students who formerly
attended class at the Rundle Building were now attending
their classes at the Dotson School. He stated that the
twelfth grade students who had formerly met their classes
at the Rundle Building were now meeting their classes in
the annex to the Rundle Building which had not been damaged
in the fire.

On March 15, 1971, Mr. E. W. Patridge, Mississippi
State Fire Marshal, advised that his laboratory at Jackson,
Mississippi, after examining the residue collected by the
Fire Marshals from the Rundle fire, had a lab report which
was negative as to cause of the blaze.

157-13921-12

11-Bureau
1-USA, Oxford
1-Secret Service, Jackson
1-OSI, Jackson

2-MIGp, Jackson
①-Jackson (157-13921)
MPM:mae
(17) MCE

Searched _____
Serialized CMS
Indexed CMS

M. P. Miller wrm

UNKNOWN SUBJECT;
BURNING OF JOHN RUNDLE HIGH SCHOOL,
GRENADA, MISSISSIPPI,
FEBRUARY 22, 1971

On March 16, 1971, Mr. F. G. Wilborn advised that he had been informed by Fire Marshal Patridge that the lab report from the Rundle Building residue was negative.

On March 18, 1971, R. B. Cottonreader, Project Director, Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Northern Mississippi, advised that nothing had come to his attention which would indicate that the fire at John Rundle High School had been other than accidental in origin.

Contact with sources who have furnished reliable information in the past failed to indicate that arson was the cause of the fire at the John Rundle High School.

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

2*

F B I

Date: 3/19/71

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)Via AIRTEL AIR MAIL
(Priority)

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (157-20965)
FROM: SAC, JACKSON (157-13921) (C)
UNSUB;
BURNING OF JOHN RUNDLE HIGH SCHOOL,
CRENADA, MISSISSIPPI,
2/22/71
RM; PE - CRA, 1964
OO: JACKSON

Re Jackson airtel to Bureau, 2/27/71.

Enclosed for the Bureau are 11 copies of an LHM re captioned matter.

One copy is also being furnished to the U. S. Attorney, Oxford, Miss., one copy to Secret Service, Jackson, Miss., one copy to OSI, Jackson, and two copies to MIGp, Jackson.

The Agent to whom information was furnished was SA M. PALMER MILLER.

Appropriate local, State, and Federal authorities have been advised.

2 - Bureau (Enc. 11) (RM)
① - Jackson
MPM:mae
(3) mxe

157-13921-13
Searched _____
Serialized WJ
Indexed WJ
Filed WJ

[Signature]
M. P. Miller mpm

Approved: _____ Sent _____ M Per _____
Special Agent in Charge

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

It's official: JRHS fire not arson

In a letter to Gen. Harold Bidby, president of Grenada's Board of Education, H. T. Busby, Chief Deputy Fire Marshall for the State of Mississippi said the fire on February 22 at John Rundle High School "probably was of accidental origin ... and probably of electrical origin and probably caused by the tornado" which hovered over this locality and did so much damage not far from Grenada.

Supporting a report in The Daily Sentinel-Star Wednesday in which Grenada Fire Chief John Chapuis was quoted to the same effect, Chief Deputy Busby's letter to Gen. Bidby read as follows:

"This is to confirm the information furnished to the Superintendent of Schools by our Deputy Fire Marshal, Earl Wayne Patridge, regarding the above fire loss.

"According to the investigation by Deputies Patridge and D. B. Crockett, this fire was probably of accidental origin and started in the front portion of the building where the offices were located. This was the night of the severe tornado which damaged buildings in this and surrounding areas and it was indicated that this fire was probably of electrical origin and probably caused by the tornado.

"There was nothing to indicate this fire was of incendiary origin and while there is no conclusive proof all evidence and information tend to corroborate the conclusion that this fire was the indirect result of the storm which took place shortly before the fire was discovered.

"Our investigation included scientific examination of the specimens taken from the area where the fire originated and the lab reports did not indicate the presence of inflammables or other materials which might have caused ignition.

"If there is anything further that we can do to assist you in this matter, please advise us."

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

PAGE 1

THE GRENADA
SENTINEL

GRENADA, MISS.

COPY SENT BUREAU

Date: 3-19-71

Edition: DAILY

Author:

Editor: JOSEPH B. LEE

Title: FIRE AT JOHN
RUNDLE HIGH
SCHOOL

Character:

or

Classification: 157-13921

Submitting Office: JACKSON

☐ Being Investigated

157-13921-14

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED <i>cm</i>	FILED <i>cm</i>
MAR 28 1971	
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